

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47), the ranking female member on the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), issued the following statement regarding today's HASC hearing on the Defense Task Force on Sexual Assault in the Military Services' recent report on the prevalence of sexual abuse in the Armed Forces:

"In 2009, the Department of Defense's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office outlined a number of cases in which servicemembers convicted of rape or aggravated sexual assault faced little, if any, punishment following their conviction. This is absolutely outrageous, and makes me wonder whether the military takes its 'zero-tolerance' policy toward sexual assault and abuse seriously.

"In the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, I was able to include a provision requiring the Comptroller-General to provide Congress with a report on each service's process for investigating and prosecuting cases of sexual assault. I want to know what barriers are preventing the Armed Services from fairly and effectively adjudicating these cases. The military may have taken major steps to prevent sexual assault in recent years, but the reality is that this issue still has not been resolved.

"In Congress, I will continue to provide oversight on this issue and fight for a military environment free from sexual violence and abuse. These acts of misogyny go against everything the United States military stands for, and it's imperative that we do everything in our power to stop them."

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